

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least 80% identical to SEQ ID NO: 2.
2. (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding the polypeptide of claim 1.
3. (Previously Presented) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 2, wherein the isolated nucleic acid comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.
4. (Previously Presented) A nucleic acid vector comprising the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 2.
5. (Previously Presented) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 4.
6. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence with at least 80% identity to SEQ ID NO: 2, the process comprising:
  - (1) culturing the host cell of claim 5 under conditions sufficient for the production of the polypeptide; and
  - (2) recovering the polypeptide.

7. (Previously Presented) The vector of claim 4, wherein the vector is selected from the group consisting of a plasmid, a virus, and a bacteriophage.

8. (Previously Presented) The vector of claim 4, wherein the isolated nucleic acid molecule is inserted into the vector in proper orientation and correct reading frame such that the polypeptide may be expressed by a cell transformed with the vector.

9. (Previously Presented) The vector of claim 4, wherein the isolated nucleic acid molecule is operatively linked to a promoter sequence.

10. (Currently Amended) An isolated antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof that binds specifically to the polypeptide of claim 1.

11–12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A composition, comprising an antibiotic and the isolated antibody or antigen-binding fragment thereof of claim 10.

14–17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting the presence of *Clostridium difficile* lactate dehydrogenase in a sample, the method comprising the steps of:

- i) contacting the sample with the isolated antibody or fragment thereof of claim 10;
- ii) detecting an antibody-antigen binding reaction; and
- iii) correlating the results of detection step (ii) with the presence of *Clostridium difficile*

lactate dehydrogenase in the sample.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting the presence of an isolated antibody or an antigen binding fragment that binds specifically to *Clostridium difficile* lactate dehydrogenase in a sample, the method comprising the steps of:

- i) contacting the sample with the composition of claim 1;
- ii) detecting any antibody-antigen binding reaction; and
- iii) correlating the results of detection step (ii) with the presence of isolated antibody specific against *Clostridium difficile* lactate dehydrogenase in the sample.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the sample is a sample from a patient.

21. (Currently Amended) A diagnostic test kit, comprising one or more of:

the isolated antibody or fragment of claim 10, or the composition of claim 1, or both; and instructions for use.

22. (Currently Amended) A kit for the treating a *Clostridium difficile* infection in a patient, comprising:

a therapeutically effective quantity of an antibiotic;  
the isolated antibody or fragment thereof of claim 10; and  
instructions for use.

23. (Previously Presented) The medicament of claim 13, wherein the antibiotic is selected from the group consisting of vancomycin, ramoplanin, teicoplanin, and metronidazole.

24–25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the sample is a sample from a patient.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

29. (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule, comprising a nucleic acid sequence at least 80% identical to SEQ ID NO: 1.